

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FRANCE REACTS AGAINST THE CRITICISM MADE AGAINST
THE IEPG

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE FROM ATLANTIC NEWS, 3 JUN 77, REPORTS
THE FRENCH REACTION TO CRITICISM BY DUTCH MEMBER OF PARLIA-
MENT KLAAS DE VRIES LEVELED AT THE IEPG. DE VRIES MADE HIS
COMMENTS AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, WHICH WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY
CONGRESSMEN WILSON AND STRATTON, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY LAST WEEK. BEGIN TEXT.
ATLANTIC NEWS NO. 937, DATED 3 JUNE 1977, SUBJECT: FRANCE
REACTS AGAINST THE CRITICISM MADE AGAINST THE IEPG.

- THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF DUTCH MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT KLAAS
DE VRIES AT THE ABSENCE OF PROGRESS IN THE WORK OF THE
INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN PROGRAMMING GROUP (IEPG) HAS EXCITED
SOME FIERCE REACTION IN CIRCLES CLOSE TO THE FRENCH DELEGA-
TION TO NATO. THE LATTER DO NOT AGREE WITH CERTAIN STATE-
MENTS MADE BY MR. DE VRIES IN HIS DRAFT REPORT ON THE
ACTIVITIES OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC
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ASSEMBLY (NAA) ON DEFENCE COOPERATION, NOR WITH THE STATE-
MENTS CONCERNING THE IEPG WHICH HE MADE TO THE PRESS AT
NATO HEADQUARTERS AT THE END OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
SUB-COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
OF THE AMERICAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (FOR MORE DETAILS,
SEE OUR LAST ISSUE).

- ACCORDING TO THESE SAME FRENCH CIRCLES, WHO FIRST OF ALL CRITICIZE THE VERY FACT THAT THE NAA SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING WAS HELD AT NATO: "THE MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING AT EVERE APPEARS TO US TO BE AN ACCIDENTAL MATTER WHICH SHOULD NOT BE REPEATED BECAUSE IT GIVES A FALSE IDEA OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ASSEMBLY AND THE ATLANTIC ORGANIZATION". THESE SAME CIRCLES POINT OUT THAT THE NAA HAS NO ORGANIC, STATUTORY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ALLIANCE. NAA CIRCLES STRESS, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT THE FACT OF MEETING AT EVERE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF NATO QUESTIONS, WHICH CAN GIVE THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS A MORE REAL IDEA OF JOINT DEFENCE NEEDS.

- AS REGARDS MR. DE VRIES'S STATEMENTS IN PARTICULAR, WHILE STRESSING THAT IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF CALLING INTO QUESTION THE RIGHT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES FREELY, THE FRENCH CIRCLES SAY THAT THEY ARE SOMEWHAT SCEPTICAL ABOUT MR. DE VRIES'S STATEMENT THAT SEVERAL AMBASSADORS TO NATO OF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ROME GROUP COULD "NOT DISAGREE" WITH THE DUTCH MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT'S VIEWS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IEPG AND FRANCE'S ROLE.

- ATTENTION IS ALSO DRAWN TO THE FACT THAT ACCORDING TO MR. DE VRIES, THE WHOLE SUB-COMMITTEE, INCLUDING PARLIAMENTARIANS NOT BELONGING TO THE ROME GROUP, SHARES HIS VIEWS, AND IT IS POINTED OUT IN THIS RESPECT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS RECOGNIZED THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO LET THIS UNCLASSIFIED

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GROUP DEVELOP ITS ACTIVITY WITHOUT EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE. IN THE ADDRESS WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER DELIVERED AT THE ATLANTIC SUMMIT IN LONDON, HE NOTABLY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT "THE EUROPEAN ALLIES WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE COOPERATION AMONG THEMSELVES IN DEFENCE PRODUCTION. I WELCOME THE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY SEVERAL OF YOUR COUNTRIES IN THE EUROPEAN PROGRAMME GROUP".

- UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, THE FRENCH CIRCLES CONCLUDE, THE IEPG CAN "PLAY ITS FULL ROLE IN THE INTEREST OF EUROPE AND, CONSEQUENTLY, OF THE ALLIANCE".

- OTHER IEPG CIRCLES, NOTABLY BRITISH OBSERVERS, CONSIDER THAT THE IEPG HAS ALREADY TAKEN A "CONSIDERABLE STEP" IN THE "DIFFICULT" FIELD OF EUROPEAN ARMS COOPERATION. THEY STRESS IN THIS RESPECT THAT "DRAMATIC PROGRESS SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED" IN THE WORK OF THE IEPG. AS FOR THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE IEPG, WHICH IS NOT "FORMAL", IT IS POINTED OUT IN IEPG CIRCLES THAT THE "ROME GROUP OPERATES SUFFI-

CIENTLY WELL AT PRESENT", AND DOES NOT, THEREFORE, NEED A
MORE CONCRETE STRUCTURE. END TEXT. STREATOR

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